

Way out West, with Lt General Pitt Rivers and Dr Williams-Freeman.

As far west as you can go in Hampshire, without stepping into adjacent Dorset or slipping into neighbouring Wiltshire (somewhere around SU 031 211 must be one of those locations where you can plant a limb in each of three counties, if you're still that supple) is the parish of Martin. And in Martin parish, in the words of J P Williams-Freeman, is the 'famous little camp' located 'in a slight hollow on the open down, on ground with a little loose soil upon the chalk, alive with rabbits and covered with wild violets'. Today it can be approached by car or on foot from the village of Martin via Sillen Lane, as it lies within the *Martin Down Nature Reserve*, or by using the spacious gravelled car park off the A354 (SU 042 203). It is still on open ground, but very grassy with no evidence of rabbits or violets and there is an extensive patch of scrub to the north-west. The main impediments to an easy approach are the innumerable ant hills which, if hidden in long grass, give one the impression of walking on a bouncy castle.



The enclosure is roughly rectangular, covering 0.6 ha (1.5 acres) with a wide entrance on the north-west side. It was the third of four camps excavated by General Pitt Rivers and he examined the bank and ditch and about half the interior. His work showed that the site belonged to the Middle Bronze Age producing Deverel-Rimbury pottery, abundant flint, and animal remains including ox, sheep, pig, red deer, horse, goat and dog. There was also a Romano-British settlement in the vicinity, represented by New Forest wares, *Samian*, Kimmeridge shale and a child burial in the ditch. With his digging done, the General had the earthwork reconstructed. A brief postscript in more recent times describes the analysis of pottery from all four camps dug by the General, as well as other Bronze Age finds in the wider locality. It suggests that, to some extent, Martin Down stood alone and was perhaps strategically placed in relation to an 'enormous enclosure' generated by the various converging lengths of Grim's Ditch.

Having paid suitable homage to the General's manoeuvres on this particular site, Williams-Freeman headed back to the high road and turned to the west. Here he found a 'fine view of the greater part of the Bokerley Dyke...especially fine if the sun is westering and throwing the ditch into deep shadow'. Half a mile further on is the point (the 'Junction') where the dyke meets the A354 and also the Roman road from Old Sarum (*Sorviodunum*) to Badbury Rings (*Vindocladia*). A classical diversion here, trying to ignore the noise and inevitable wayside accessories of trunk-road life (there is often a tea-shack in the Woodyates lay-by) is to cut back to the north-east along the *agger* and experience a length of the Roman road – the Ackling Dyke.



Cart loads of gravel metalling have been robbed-away in places and rabbits (no doubt having migrated from Martin Down Camp) continue to despoil its profile, but at least their efforts give some insight into the make-up of the road. Here, you can tiptoe along the county boundary between Hampshire and Wiltshire but take care not to step into the numerous burrows!

Pitt Rivers excavations are well-represented in the splendid Wessex Gallery at Salisbury Museum. Those looking for a wider appreciation of the area should seek out the Royal Commission volume on Bokerley Dyke (1990).